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THE CRAYON.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY, 1860.

Sketchings.

OUR ARCHITECTURAL HONESTY.

THE Lawrence tragedy is a most significant illustration of public ignorance concerning the morality of our architecture. To any one who is behind the building curtain, who sees how matter in the shape of bricks, mortar and stone tells a story of corruption, such a catastrophe as that at Lawrence is easily accounted for. The bad quality of material or masonry and the culpable neglect of capitalists in this special instance, are but shadows of the real cause. The remedy is not with coroner's juries—it must be sought for in another direction, in principles which juries never take into consideration.

It is a notorious fact that the best architecture receives the least notice at the hands of the press; or when noticed, the signs of a muddled perception are so obvious that the judgment of the writer is rendered wholly nugatory. Another notorious fact is that those who construct inferior buildings are the most active in bringing them before the public through the newspapers. We have seen flaring stores composed of architectural wens in the shape of ugly brackets, pilasters, cornices, etc., also magnified windows serving as façades, which instances come under the head of architectural morbid anatomy, mentioned with commendation by the press as "noble examples of American enterprise." And, again, churches loaded with false ornamentation and stamped with faults of design and construction, such as an educated eye looks upon with contempt, indorsed by editors with the choicest superlatives in the language. The press seems to swallow everything with one gulp, making the same exclamation at the food it receives into its capacious maw as the Yankee who had nothing to eat but a dish of clams, "Aint them beautiful!" There is a kind of good nature in the system, we admit, but it is of a barbarous kind, and like all things barbarous, destructive. The evil, then, for which the press is responsible, is that of stamping bad and superficial work as good. Instructed in the art of writing, editors think good grammar is warrant enough for any respectable effusion, and whether true or not, they take any verdict that comes, original or selected, because it is *news for the public*. Journals of good standing admit into their columns architectural items and other artistic information quite as undeserving of circulation as counterfeit notes that represent a fraud. One of the most noted instances is the favor which the completion of the monument at Washington meets with from a certain portion of the press—one of the most disgraceful projects, architecturally, that the country ever authorized. By this course the press establishes credit for irresponsible parties; it brings into notice people who do not really understand the first principles of construction; these people build our houses, and the whole city groans with complaints. It is useless for the press to appeal to law as the proper regulator of mechanical conditions—that walls shall be just so thick for such a height, etc.; the law is impotent by the side of mechanical craft. What is wanted is a reliable public judge of *quality* such as the press can prove itself to be by acknowledging its responsibility to competent authority; it must be brought to view art through its practitioners, as it views the sciences, instead of giving editorial houserom to quackery.

Another evil akin to the irresponsibility of the press is that of the self-confidence and effrontery of building-committees. The late Plymouth Church competition is a most remarkable example. A careful perusal of the analysis in previous numbers of the CRAYON of the prospectus issued by the committee, and its late review of the plans submitted to their judgment, will enable the reader to see the relation of ideal presumption to real conditions. We could not point to a more extraordinary instance of grave folly.

Another concomitant of sound architecture, and the most important condition to be kept in mind, is a better appreciation of the *artistic function* as one of the elements of social economy. It is not easy to describe this function abstractedly; it stands for, in other words, the *utility of beauty*, and is a function the value of which is best made visible by certain facts. People ride behind the clattering locomotive, lay wagers on the speed of ocean steamers, command the lightning and use the sunshine to take their likenesses, never dreaming of the profession to which they are indebted for these agencies. They are not aware that the men who first employed these immaterial forces for public good, Fulton, Morse and Daguerre, were artists. Because they were such, that is, men who studied nature, gazing with a subtle and penetrating eye into its mysteries they brought order out of chaos for the benefit of humanity. The most useful instruments of the day are thus due to artists; their superior faculty for developing usefulness may be said to represent the artistic function. It is for this reason that an architect is an artist; he brings order out of the chaotic desire of him who employs him. And the beauty and utility of his work lies in the fact that it embraces an idea in a material form in its greatest and most beautiful degree of economy. The architect's structure is a complete unity, which a common builder's is not, because the latter filches and does not create forms adapted to the idea given to him. This is why we have so many abortions of various styles, like the sperm-candle columns and entrance-caverns that characterize some of the late structures in Broadway. The builder's structure is, therefore, ugly, and because ugly it is impossible for it to be a sound or economical construction. Low contracts and the mean resources of competition afford facilities for the erection of structures, it is true, but it is frequently at the expense of life as at the Lawrence manufactory.

It is folly to contend for architectural safeguards by using a particular instance of bad building as a text, when the truth is, there is scarcely any really good building to be found. The evil is to be attacked in another quarter, and that quarter is the Press, which is the only safeguard that people respect. If the Press is so indifferent to the matter as to diffuse deception, it cannot complain of dishonest architecture.

THE PORTRAITS OF WASHINGTON IRVING.

VANDERLYN probably took the first portrait of Mr. Irving, when the latter was between 21 and 22 years of age. The well known Jarvis portrait, taken when Mr. Irving was 27 years old, is the next in point of time, and doubtless gives the most favorable and also the most accurate delineation of Mr. Irving in feature and expression of all the others. Next follow the Stuart Newton, Leslie and Wilkie portraits, painted during Mr. Irving's residence in Spain and England, and lastly the Martin crayon drawing, and a sketch by Darley. Engravings of the Jarvis, Leslie and Martin portraits, also of the Darley sketch, have been issued here and are familiar to all. The Wilkie por-

trait has doubtless been engraved, but copies are not commonly met with in this country; we believe the Stuart Newton head has also been engraved. Quite lately an excellent daguerreotype likeness of Mr. Irving has been found, taken when he was in the prime of his old age, before his expression was affected by illness. One of his most intimate friends speaks of this likeness in the following terms: "What a precious discovery! I was quite overcome on seeing it, and we had at home an evening of real thanksgiving; we may now say that he still lives in our eyes, as he must always in our hearts." We recapitulate the various portraits, designating them by the name of the artist, with the age of Mr. Irving at the time they were taken.

Vanderlyn, 1805 or 1806, between 21 and 22.

Jarvis, 1810, aged 27.

Leslie, 1823, aged 40.

Stuart Newton, between 1825 and 1832.

Wilkie, between 1825 and 1832.

Martin, 1851, aged 68.

Darley (a sketch), 1848, aged 65.

Daguerreotype, 1856 or 1857, aged 73.

Darley's sketch, affixed to "Irvingiana," is a hasty trifle, and was never intended as anything more; it is not good in figure, features, size, shape or dress, all wrong and common, and is, we think, an unfortunate publication. Martin's crayon drawing is weak, commonplace and uncharacteristic. The merits of the other portraits are substantiated by the reputation of the artists, and by Mr. Irving's own indorsement. There may be other sketches of Mr. Irving in England which will, doubtless, come to light.

DOMESTIC ART GOSSIP.

NEW YORK.—The first reception of the season came off at Dodworth's on the 4th ult. with such success as to make it evident that periodical receptions have become an indispensable institution. Over 1200 guests were present. As usual, the *élite* of the city appeared there, both the honored and the beautiful, to say nothing of the large crowd of appreciative observers. The exhibition of works of art was quite as large as any exhibition of the past season, the entire collection, with the exception of one picture (by Duverger), being by native artists. We noticed in the collection Huntington's *Ichabod Crane*; Gray's *Truth*, and one of his cabinet-size ideal heads; a *Girl kneeling at her Orisons*, by Johnson; a *Street-sweeper*, by Staigg; several of Baker's fine heads; an ideal subject by Greene; a *Falstaff*, by Blondell; a *David*, by Oertel; with one of C. G. Thompson's late works, all of which represent the figure department of Art. In landscape, Hart's *Placid Lake* was most conspicuous; Gifford was chiefly represented by a *Lake scene*; Wm. Hart by a *Marine view*; Hubbard by *Crossing the Bridge*; Gignoux by *Spring*; Bierstadt by *Rocky Mountain passages*; Shattuck by studies on the *Androskoggin*, and Coleman by similar subjects; Nichols by three pictures, forming a series called *The River*; Jerome Thompson by *Orange County studies*; Williamson by two landscapes *Morning* and *Evening*; Durand by a small *Afternoon scene*; Bellows by a *composition*; Dix by a *Marine*, and Brevoort by a study from nature. Of cattle-subjects, Tait, Waterman and Oertel contributed characteristic specimens; Hays sent a *dog's head*. In the portrait line, Wenzler's head of a lady was conspicuous. Hall's *Fruit and Flowers*, and three *medallions*, Thompson sending two and Gott one, complete the list of attractions.

G. C. Lambdin has at Goupil's gallery two pictures entitled "Watching," and "He loves me, he loves me not." The first represents a child seated at a window, looking intently out of it, and the second, two children under a tree pulling daisies to pieces, repeating the words of the title.

Lentze has a Venetian subject upon his easel. Under the arch of the bridge which spans the mouth of the canal separating the Ducal Palace from the grim old prison, appears a barge filled with gay masqueraders returning home from the carnival at early morning. The spirit of revelry has not subsided. Richly dressed women and men still keep up their thoughtless frolic. One of the revellers stands with a guitar and sings apparently with defiance at the gloomy walls of the prison as the boat approaches it. Looking beyond this figure and aloft, we see the Bridge of Sighs receiving the first rays of dawn; the eye then descends to the water-line of the prison, where a feeble light in the sombre shadow of its wall reveals a strange contrast to the joyousness of the masqueraders. The black prow of a gondola looms up, and figures are seen by lamplight scarcely more than shadows, passing a corpse into the boat from a low portal in the prison wall, some victim who is made to disappear when the city is supposed to be locked in slumber. The gay barge, as it advances through the water in full broad light, presents in its wild crowd of glittering pleasure-seekers, a striking contrast to this sombre group beyond—vague forms hovering over a friendless corpse about to be consigned to an unknown grave. The work is one of those dramatic subjects that Mr. Lentze excels in.

Of Mr. Lang's recent and best work we take the following description from *The Century*:

"Lang has just finished, for a gentleman of this city, an historical picture, which he calls 'The Last Supper of Mary Queen of Scots.' The title suggests the event illustrated. The time is the night before the memorable execution. The beautiful but misguided queen, her face still calm, serene and lovely, her figure robed in green velvet, occupies the centre of the picture, and stands on a raised dais, while her attendants, fourteen in number, and overcome with grief, are grouped about her in different attitudes. The queen, firm and erect, has just finished that address to her attendants which is familiar to every reader of history, and is about to raise the cup to her lips to drink a last pledge of affection for them. The venerable physician, as well as the surgeon of her household, occupies a position in the background, to the left. Little Mary Curly, her eyes wet with tears, leans sorrowfully on the bosom of the venerable man, who looks on in pity. Mrs. Kennedy, who forms one of this group, seems muttering a prayer, while Mrs. Curly kneels before the queen and invokes the interposition of the Allwise, while struggling to suppress her emotions. Prostrate at the foot of the dais, and before the queen, is her French maid of honor, offering her own life to save that of her royal mistress. The effect produced here is impressive and grand. The group to the right is composed of her maids of honor and other attendants, all finely distributed and effectively portrayed. The picture, as a whole, is bold and impressive, all the details of that painful event being clearly and delicately expressed."

We have also to chronicle a reception at the Studio Building on the evening of the 19th ult., as brilliant and as crowded as one could desire. Exhibition-room and studios overflowed with the beauties of art and nature. In the former, Lentze's "Washington at the Battle of Princeton," a very fine landscape by McEntee called "Autumn leaves" (the gem of the collec-

tion in landscape), a "Volcano" by Church, a composition by Casilear, Rocky Mountain subjects by Bierstadt, a Campagna scene by Haseltine, a Snow-scene by Boughton, an "Autumnal Scene" by Moore, a portrait of Oliver Wendell Holmes by Buchanan Read, Jackson's bas-relief of "Night," a head by Rowse, together with a number of works mentioned above (exhibited in the reception at Dodworth's) by Gifford, Shattuck, Thompson, Hays and others, formed the principal attractions. The light being shielded from the spectators by a screen under the gas-burners, the pictures appeared to great advantage. The studios were brilliantly illuminated, each one presenting a separate gallery.

Hicks has nearly completed the finished study for his large picture of "The Literary Men of America," begun some months ago. The nature of the subject, as well as its treatment, renders this one of the most important historical pictures of the day. One of the most interesting figures in the group is that of Washington Irving, who occupies a place in the centre; Mr. Hicks has chosen Newton's portrait as the best one of Irving.

Of recent examples of portraiture, we would mention one by Staigg of an old lady, and one by Gray also of a lady; each in their peculiar style being works of rare merit. Such portraits show how superior Art is to photography. The next exhibition will afford our readers, we hope, an opportunity to judge for themselves.

Mr. Wust, who occupies a studio in the University Building, is engaged upon a large landscape representing a flat meadow expanse varied by inlets of water and boats in the foreground; a brilliant effective sky heightens the interest of the subject. We look forward to the completion of the pictures with much interest.

Mr. Fuechsel, in Appleton's building, has just finished a view on Staten Island, embracing Fort Hamilton and the Narrows, and the wooded shores of the island. Besides this work Mr. Fuechsel has completed a sunny mountain scene, suggested by a view from the top of Mt. Kearsarge, and several foreign scenes of interest.

The National Academy of Design circular for the forthcoming spring exhibition will be found on our advertisement page. Pictures will be received between the 26th and 31st of March. The exhibition will open on the 12th of April and close on the 16th of June.

WASHINGTON.—Our National Art Association closed its convention on Friday, 13th ult., after a session of three days. It was not so numerously attended as on former occasions; but there were present artists from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Charleston, and Missouri. As the proceedings are not yet published, we will now merely mention that the convention adjourned to meet in the *City of New York*, on the second Tuesday of January next. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

J. R. LAMBDIN, of Philadelphia, President;
 HORATIO STONE, of Washington, V. President;
 G. O. BINGHAM, of Missouri, "
 H. PETERS GRAY, of New York, "
 JOHN SARTAIN, of Philadelphia, Secretary;
 J. M. STANLEY, of Washington, Treasurer.

THE disorganized condition of Congress has thus far prevented the Art Commissioners from accomplishing anything, inasmuch as further legislation is necessary before they can have anything beyond a mere negative power.

Mr. H. K. Brown's design for the pediment of the State

capitol at Columbia, South Carolina, has been adopted, and he has been commissioned by the legislature to execute the same, coupled with the condition that the work must be done at Columbia, S. C. The commission is a most liberal one, and should be an example to other legislatures.

Mr. Corcoran's building for art purposes has progressed only to the first tier of iron joists. The work has been suspended for the winter, but when completed, will be admirably adapted for the reception and exhibition of paintings and sculpture. It is hoped that the future management will be as judicious and liberal.

A bronze statue of the late Thomas H. Benton has been commissioned by Dr. Horatio Stone, of this city for the city of St. Louis.

Mr. W. D. Washington has on hand a large picture of Marion entertaining the British officers. It is being painted for Mr. McDonald, of Baltimore, the size about eight by twelve feet; it is said to be a considerable advance on any previous work. He occupies the admirably constructed gallery over that of the venerable Charles B. King.

Volk, of Chicago, is here, and about to model a bust of Mrs. Senator Douglas.

VIRGINIA.—A bill for a statue in honor of Madison is before the Virginia legislature. It proposes to appropriate \$10,000 for the work, and commission Mr. Barbee to execute it.

The statue of George Mason, for the Washington monument at Richmond, has arrived. It is the last, we believe, of Mr. Crawford's works for this monument.

BOSTON.—We hear that the Jarves collection has been purchased, or is about to be, by a gentleman of New York, now in Italy. The effort to obtain it for Boston is of course abandoned.

PHILADELPHIA.—The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts will open its 37th annual exhibition on Monday the 23d of April. Works intended for exhibition will be received between the 28th of March and the 7th of April, the exhibition to close on the 16th of June. See advertisement.

TROY.—We take the following items, on the forthcoming Exhibition, from the "Daily Arena," an active, enterprising paper in Troy, and one of the few papers that keeps watchful eyes upon doings in the art world: The committee having charge of the forthcoming exhibition are vigorously at work. They have the Exhibition room now in perfect order, and we are inclined to think it is the finest room in the State for the purposes of a public gallery. The promise is good for the choicest collection that has ever graced this community, and the gallery will be thrown open, we understand, certainly by the first of February, and perhaps several days earlier. The committee decided, as we have heretofore announced, to open upon the 20th January, but subsequent developments made it entirely impossible to be in readiness by that time. The gallery will be composed strictly of works of art which have not before been publicly exhibited in this city. Among the works of art secured for the exhibition are Palmer's statue of *The Little Peasant*, his bust of *Spring*, and a bust of *Governor Morgan*; four pictures by Church, which have never been exhibited; six pictures by Durand, five by Kensett, and one or more from Cropsey, Casilear, Elliot, Gray, Huntington, Hicks, Wm. Hart, Gifford, Lambdin, Weber, Boughton, Shattuck, Ehninger, Hubbard, Coleman, Washington, Boutelle, Bellows, Staigg, Lang, A. W. Warren, McEntee, Geo. H. Hall, Hennessy, Moore, Lanfant de Metz, Lemmens, Lambinet, T. Buckley, A. P. Boller, and a

large list of other eminent artists, to which may be added some drawings by Berket Foster, and Thompson's medallions of *Girlhood*, and *Il Penseroso*.

A NEW ARTIST.

OYSTER-POND POINT, January 5, 1860.

Dear Crayon :

It will hardly be denied that your city, the first in the new world in wealth and commercial enterprise, is fully entitled to a like position in the realm of Art. Each year adds some new name to the already brilliant cluster of artists, and the demand for even respectable pictures, indicates the liberality if not the discrimination of purchasers.

But while Cropsey, Casilear, Kensett, Church, Durand and their associates are continually adding to their high reputations, and Tait and Hays give us their well-studied portraiture of animal life, the name of one who has at length opened a new path in American art, and who in a short time has come to be popular in our neighborhood, deserves some notice from those who are interested in its progress. I allude to a rising young man, Matthew Pfitzer, "Oyster painter." Pfitzer, when a boy, manifested an unmistakable love for the whole family of bivalves; they were his pets, the companions of his play hours. He has been known to steal away from school and seek the company of that worthy class of commercial men, the oyster dealers, and few of their number were better acquainted with the peculiar habits of their commodity than the subject of this sketch. Long before the dawn appeared that foreshadowed the luxuriant moustache that renders Pfitzer's face so spiritual, he thoroughly understood the distinguishing characteristics of Little Necks, Blue Points, Cow Bays, Saddle Rocks, Shrewsbury, and so through the long catalogue to the real "old Virginies." Pfitzer was, in short, a born lover of nature.

Almost every leisure moment found Pfitzer in some way or other occupied in his favorite study. As youth, however, began to move toward manhood, some occupation by which to gain his daily bread was naturally thought of. Pfitzer was secretly determined to be an artist. He knew that oysters were perishable and that Art was immortal. In vain were diverse plans proposed for him by his parents; the counting-room and the law with their dry technicalities, and medicine with its drudgery, the ministry with its responsibility, were alike unacceptable. His life, his energies—for his heart was in it—must be devoted to Art. Parents argued and reasoned with Pfitzer, and friends in good society declared they could not tolerate one of the family so employed; but no, his mind was made up, and argument and persuasion were alike unheeded. In this emergency, some good genius, knowing Pfitzer's penchant, whispered that the oyster had no painter. Landseer was famous by his noble pictures of animals, why should not Pfitzer render American art and American oysters equally celebrated! The suggestion was approved of by the elder Pfitzer, and the friends who moved in the best society were reconciled; for an artist, they reasoned, is always an artist, whatever may be his peculiar line of subject.

Matthew was placed with one of the best art preceptors in our midst, and for a time his progress was slow and almost discouraging. One day, however, he brought to the school a drawing of an oyster. The teacher was astonished, for the attempts of the pupil in trees and figures were entire failures; but here was a production which would do credit, in its way, to an accomplished master.

From this time forth, Pfitzer devoted his energies unceasingly

to this branch of art, and rose as if by magic to the position in which his intimate friends now find him. Enter his large and elegant studio. The walls are of a delicate pearly tint (for even here he is true to his love). Over the door, as you enter, hang garlands of seaweed, while brackets of coral hold in their embrace every variety of oyster shell, from the enormous corrugated specimens of the eastern waters to the natives of our own beds. On the shelves and mantel-piece, you see them grouped, as they have been or are to be painted. A large aquarium contains living specimens, for the enthusiastic artist's use when he sees fit to depart from his still-life pictures, to portray the oyster in action. Neither are the representatives of a sister art wanting to render the atmosphere of the place such as a true artist should breathe. Here stands a grand action piano forte, while a harp, whose strings a minstrel might delight to sweep, occupies one corner, and a guitar and flute repose over an immense oyster-shell bracket, which we were told came from the famous bed opposite Norwalk. It has been whispered that fair maidens find their way to this grotto-like resort, and while the artist transfers in glowing tints his subject to the canvas, soft music lightens the labors of the pencil, thus affording a chance for youth and beauty to playfully boast that they assisted Mr. Pfitzer in this or that successful picture.

But to the man himself. In a remote corner of this immense room sat Pfitzer. He had not observed us as we entered, for his door is always open. He kept his seat until we approached, but continued working. He was glad to see us—hoped we had not come to give him a commission, as he was full for five years—told us to make ourselves comfortable, and not to mind him, as he could work and talk too. A canvas from three to four feet wide, by nearly double its width in length was on the easel, and, nearly covering its entire surface was the outline of an idea now in progress, to be called "The Sound, the Bay and the River," a work intended to bring into one harmonious whole, the several varieties of oysters from those well-known localities. Ranged side by side like ranks of soldiers, each shell painted with the accuracy of the photograph, the very ridges appeared to be enumerated, so closely did they resemble the models on the table. To an uneducated eye like ours, the different objects looked alike except in size, but on remarking this to the painter, he warmed into enthusiasm, and proceeded to point out the points of difference—the color and shape of the shells of the several varieties, and even the color of the bed which clung to some, the flat and the round ones, the long and the short, till we were astonished at the knowledge as well as the genius of the painter. The background was in dead color, but the nearer parts were sufficiently indicated to show the aim of the picture. One feature of the work struck us as novel and even bold in its conception, and this was the introduction in one corner of a beautiful moss rose. We hesitated about asking the reason of this, thinking possibly it might be a tribute to one or other of the fair ones who resort to this poetic studio. But as we came for information, we made bold to ask why a moss rose should find its home by the side of an oyster bed? We were frankly told by the artist that he had seen one there, and this, too, with an air of ill-concealed vexation at our want of appreciation of the beautiful. We were content, for we were satisfied that artists always see so many more things than mere laymen like ourselves! This picture was painted to fill a commission given by Thomas Downey, Esq., whose gallery is so well known to the public, but no price had been named for it, the artist preferring to await the verdict of

the public before giving it a money value. He intended to have it exhibited on private view, and we learned that it would probably be engraved, and, said the artist, jocosely, I shall expect all who receive a ticket to subscribe for an artist's proof.

"You have lately finished a picture for Mr. ———," said we. "Oh, yes; have you not seen it? I have it here; it has been returned to me—to repaint some parts which are too indistinct." Pfitzer then placed on the easel the well known picture founded on the lines of the poet, "Happy as a clam at high water." It would be in vain to attempt an adequate description of this painting. It was sunrise, and in apology for the rather cheese-like appearance of the luminary, Pfitzer said that he didn't pretend to paint the sky—oysters and clams were his specialty; neither did he care much about the truth of the water. We were rather disappointed at first, as there was nothing but an expanse of sky and water with a strip of sand near the corner of the canvas. We asked where the clam was. "Ah," said the delighted artist, "I knew you would ask that. Do you see that small orifice in the sand?" "Yes." "Well, that's the breathing hole made by the clam, and that I consider the sentiment of my picture—far down in its sandy bed it sleeps, and as the full tide comes in, the clam is supposed to drink in its delight, and thus aptly illustrate the subject I have painted." The mystery of the subject was complete, and as this point is considered a great essential in works of art, we confessed to the artist that he had more than accomplished his object.

It would be almost impossible to recount the many works which have been produced by the magic pencil of Pfitzer. A small picture which is now in one of the large private collections of our country, deserves mention. The title is "The Pride of Virginia," and it is nothing less than a large Virginia oyster entirely nude, and reposing on a half-shell. Its fair proportions are just as nature made them, and in this as in all works of our artist, the absurdity of ideal beauty is nobly and boldly repudiated. Pfitzer advocates the not entirely new doctrine that "to the pure all things are pure," and in the case of this picture the motto which is in letters of gold immediately over the picture, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," shows that he is not fearful of the censure of a prudish and cold-blooded public.

Pfitzer showed us a sketch for a large picture illustrating the fable of "The Rat and the Oyster." The oyster has clasped the tail of the impertinent quadruped, which is represented as having nearly descended into his abode, so that you see little else than the oyster and the tail of the animal. The artist was undecided as to whether he would amend the sketch by showing the hind legs of the rat, but as he prides himself upon being only an oyster painter, he will doubtless adhere to his original study.

We would gladly give additional particulars relative to Pfitzer, but we say to the public, go and see for yourselves when you have a chance, and do not exclaim with an ignorant fellow who passed from the studio as we entered, "I can buy a hundred oysters for a dollar and eat them, too, and yet this man charges five hundred and a thousand dollars for a painting of an oyster shell."

Yours,

PROSE PERKINS.

GLEANINGS AND ITEMS.

THE Cincinnati Daily Gazette, of December 15th, 1859, thus considers the question of *Naked Art*:

The CRAYON for the current month contains a criticism upon

naked art, with especial reference to the "White Captive," of Palmer, and the "Venus guiding Æneas," of Page, which we transfer to our columns. We cannot say how correct the CRAYON's criticism of the two works referred to may be. We have seen neither of them. But a former Venus of Page's we have seen. It was low and sensual and repulsive—nay, disgusting, and had an unmistakably "dirty" appearance, which no goddess of beauty rising from the sea could have had, though it was such as might have been found on the mother of the child whose finger the witches in Macbeth used. The criticism, however, on naked art generally, is suggestive. We cannot indorse it. We do not believe that the human form is necessarily "sensual," nay "sensuous." Exquisite curves, lines of beauty, positions of grace are to be found in the human form which are nowhere else perceptible. If we believe that "God made man in his own image," we must think that the "image" extended further than mental and moral similarity. It is, indeed, the belief of a large portion of the religious world, that in the human form once dwelt the Divine Life—that God was incarnated. We have further seen an argument by a writer of ability and influence, to prove that God could not be made manifest to man in any form but the human. If we would not go so far as this, we shall yet find that there is running through the entire realm of animal life, a plan which points to man as the highest animal, as the most perfect creature. Not in intellect alone, but in bodily structure and organization, man is the crown of the animal creation. In him centre all that is beautiful in outline, or useful in purpose, in the lower animals. The fin of the fish, the wing of the bird, are but types either of degree of use or of beauty, of the limbs of man. And what imperfect types! How faintly do the locomotive organs of the huge Saurians of the geologic periods foreshadow the exquisite blending of grace and power which the limbs of man possess! Into man as into a sheaf of beauty have been bound up all the perfections of the lower animals. The CRAYON finds no fault with the portrayal of fine animals. It surely cannot reprove the feeling of delight we experience when a horse, clothed in strength, perfect in all his points, paws the ground before us. Why, then, should it find fault with the portrayal of the animal man, when it does not object to the representation of the animal horse? Incontestably the perfect human form is more beautiful than that of the perfect equine form. Is it objected that we rarely or never see the naked human form, and that such infrequency makes the view of that form, as conceived by the artist, and painted on the canvas, or cut in the marble, an incentive to passion? We think their judgment is better and their art broader, who say that nudity is not necessarily impurity. Unquestionably there are paintings which are impure, and statues which are anything but chaste. Shameful though the confession be, there have been artists who have prostituted their genius to the service of the animal passions.

The buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum have given up their dead art, and now in the Museo Borbonico, it speaks volumes for the horrible depravity of the Roman people! It is fit that it remain there. It is proper that in a gallery named for a family of tyrants, such records of impurity should be garnered. It is meet that despotism be the warder of licentiousness. Yet he who would include in one sweeping denunciation all the naked art (an awkward expression, by the by), of Rome and Greece, would be as unjust as he who should class the Golden Ass of Apuleius with the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, because they are both romances.

Who is moved to impurity as he sees the "Gladiator," or gazes with painful admiration upon the swelling muscles of the Father and his sons writhing in the serpent's folds? Who can stand before the mutilated "Venus of Milo" with any feeling but admiration of its wondrous matronly beauty? What though the form be bare to the waist—is it not "clothed on with Chastity?" The poets have a way of summing up into a phrase or a line a whole argument. Tennyson has proved himself a poet in that one phrase. The Lady Godiva rode on "clothed in chastity;" and so there are statues

which, though nude, have thrown about them a robe of purity that blunts the arrows of passion so that they fall harmless. And what is true of statues is true of paintings, though, perhaps, not to so great a degree. We now recall an engraving which we do not doubt the CRAYON would blame as a piece of "Naked Art." It is a lithograph of Van Dyck's "Danaë receiving the golden shower." We have been assured that the lithograph conveys but a faint sense of the beauty of the painting. We can readily believe the assertion. But how beautiful must the painting be! In the lithograph, every fibre in her body seems alive with joy. She is "happy all over." There is a gladness on the face which seems like a strong light to illuminate the entire form. We have no further opportunity to particularize. We must be content with reiterating our belief that naked art is not sensual by necessity.

It may be or it may not be, as the artist's mind and the spectator's are pure. It has been well said that the same music may stir one to devotion and move another to crime. And so the pure may see reason for adoration of our Maker that he has made man so fair, in a statue which the sensual shall find a spur to his sensualism. The same flame may kindle the censor that is swung before the altar and light the torch that is to shine upon the debauchee's revels. "For he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good."

"Yet naked art is, if not decidedly impure, at least immodest."

This assertion, we think, is sufficiently met by the fact that modesty, after all, is very much a matter of custom and convention. Habit accustoms people to anything. The Turkish woman looks with horror upon the Frank who unveils her face, and yet does not reluct at being one of a harem. Whether a portion of the human form or the whole shall be exposed, is a question of climate and custom. There are peoples who wear no clothing and are yet as pure and as truly modest as any of the civilized and dressing nations. It may shock our sense of modesty to see naked art for the first time. But the eye soon grows familiar to it, and a pure admiration takes the place of a shrinking sense of modesty.

If only the mind be pure it shall see nature pure. But if it be diseased, it shall impart its own hue to all it views. The CRAYON speaks of efforts "to detach the spirit from the flesh—the soul from the body." Against such efforts we protest. Spiritual beauty is a higher beauty, we admit, than physical beauty. But we are so constituted that we cannot recognize the soul as detached from the body. We must, if we see the soul, see it through the body. When we are disembodied spirits, all of us, our ghostly painters may give us shadowy pictures of spirits detached from the bodies. Till then, we trust artists will give us bodies as well as souls to look at. We cannot conceive of man as a purely spiritual being. Despite ourselves, we clothe our conceptions with a body. Artists, if artists, will conform to this law of our being, regardless of the dogmas of critics and teachers. The "perfect man" is physically, as well as mentally and morally, beautiful. If we cannot hope for a perfect man, nor the portrayal of a perfect man, if we must have only a portion of him, of course we would prefer to look at his soul, for that is the dominant note of his being. How often do we see the most regular features distorted and made awry by evil passions! How frequently is the radiance of a beautiful soul shed upon a homely face, making it attractive, and gradually molding it to regularity and beauty of outline. No other than a great artist can preserve in his creations the balance between physical and spiritual beauty. If he perfect the physical form, he shall not be able to animate it with the beautiful soul. If he succeed in conveying the idea of spiritual beauty, the physical shall be wanting, and so the CRAYON is practically right in recommending the banishment of naked art, though theoretically wrong.

For there shall be a hundred Venus-de-Medicis to one Venus of Milo, and a thousand Page's Venuses to one Venus-de-Medici. Then, too, if you once convey to the mind spiritual beauty, the imagination will reflect somewhat of that spiritual beauty upon the form

through which it is manifest, as the glass, while the wine is in it, is the color of its contents.

The error into which the CRAYON falls is natural, though grave. It is the mistake constantly made by the "idealists," who look upon man as a soul in a body, and not as a soul and a body, complexly united, and both necessary to his existence as a man. For, without the soul, man would become a brute, and Art would become as sensual and degraded as it was in Pompeii; while, without the body, man would become as unsubstantial as Ossian's ghosts, and Art an impossibility.

We print the foregoing, not for the purpose of debating the question or to point out the writer's inconsistencies and the irrelevance of his remarks to the article on naked art in the CRAYON; we publish the article because we have been told there are some good ideas in it, and that it would be useful to circulate them. We reject the "*fact*, that modesty, after all, is very much a matter of custom and convention," and accept the indorsement of the writer that the CRAYON is "practically right in recommending the banishment of naked art."

THE following notice of the *Dead Pearl Diver*, we find in the New York correspondence of the "Boston Courier."

I must confess, perhaps to my shame, I have never heard of Paul Akers, or had forgotten his name. The first impression when we entered the room, was that of pain. A youth lies before you stretched in death; but this feeling soon changed into pity, mel-
lowed by the delight in the exquisite beauty of the whole work. We look thus with pity, yet with admiration, upon a noble youth lying on the battle sod. The pearl-fisher shows neither pain nor struggle, but reminds us rather of the gently removal by the torch-reverting god, that brought long, lasting sleep to Cleobis and Biton. We left the room because evening was setting in, congratulating ourselves that an artist is left us, who reminds us of our friend that chiselled Orpheus. The reality of Akers' work, the anatomy of the difficult posture, over which the charms of a touching gracefulness are poured, the truthfulness of death without one element of repulsion, are surprising and lovely. I use the term loveliness on purpose. Germans would say that the body is *hingegossen*, a term for which I cannot find at the moment an equivalent in our tongue.

There is death, yet it is neither rigid nor flaccid; there is that chaste and solemn nudity, which suggests the idea of the beautiful creature as it comes from the hand of the divine Conceiver and Maker, and is the opposite of that obtrusive nakedness which amounts to little more than a negation of drapery. We have had enough of this sensual denudation. If a cold, white marble, representing a dead body, produces in the beholder the desire of impressing a blessing kiss of parting on it, as we feel when we see a maiden, that we shall see no more, wreathed and smiling in her last sleep, it must be, I think, a beautiful work; and every one of our party, young and old, male and female, confessed they had that desire on leaving the statue. Were it not that it represents death, I should say that it is full of warmth and soul. You have heard me say that were I a wealthy man, I would request the fittest artist to sculpture Socrates shielding and rescuing his youthful friend, Alcibiades, bleeding on the ground in the battle of Potidæa. This idea presented itself again to my mind when beholding Akers' Pearl Fisher.

THE Scandinavians have a God, Kvasir, who was suffocated by the multitude of ideas sticking in his throat, because he could not find any one who could question him fast enough to get them out of him. There are many who are nearly choked by the converse-process, the attempt to get one idea into them.—*Boyes.*